

TALES THE ANGLERS BRING ALONG HOME

Constancy of the Male Salmon and Fickleness of Its Widow.

SNAPPERS OF MANY GIFTS

The Gobbled Gudgeon, of Which Canandaigua Lake Has a Monopoly.

The favorite nature tale of the former overseer of an English fish and game preserve, L. M. Burt, now a resident of Canada, is about a bereaved pair of salmon and the different emotions shown by the male salmon and the female salmon. By a series of experiments Mr. Burt demonstrated that a male salmon will at once and in evident grief abandon his home when bereft of his mate at spawning time, while if the male member is taken from his mate the female salmon will lose no time in securing another husband.

"There was a fine stretch of salmon stream on the estate," says Mr. Burt, "and one season when the salmon began coming in to spawn I discovered one particularly fine pair that had chosen as their home a shallow place under an old stone bridge, where the water was very clear, with a bright, gravelly bottom. The female scooped out a big, shallow place in the gravel with her nose and in that excavation began depositing her eggs. At this time she was clearly attended by her mate, who guarded her from a host of enemies, prowling foes that were eager to despoil her of her spawn. The male salmon was plainly proud of his task. He would rise gracefully in the water and then settle gently back near his mate, first on one side of her and then on the other. After each of these evolutions he would pass entirely around the nest, describing a circle perhaps three feet wider than the nest and permitting no lurking trout or broom or other egg hunter to approach near them.

"One day, in the interest of ichthyological research I spared the female salmon on her nest. The sudden plunge of the gig frightened the male and he darted several feet away from the nest, stopping quickly though and returning to the nest. I drew my victim, impaled on the spear, slowly upward.

"Her lord rushed after her and followed to the top of the water. I lifted the speared salmon out. The male paused a moment near the surface and then dropped quickly back to the nest. He swam around it frantically, all the quiet, tender dignity of his courtship hours gone, and then rushed away down stream like a racehorse. I watched the nest two days. The salmon thus bereft of his mate never came back to it.

"Satisfied at his constancy in widowhood, I resolved to find out what the conduct of a female salmon would be if widowed under similar circumstances. I discovered another pair on their spawning ground and succeeded in spearing the male. The female spared some little agitation, but soon recovered, and presently moved hurriedly off down stream.

"Another prospective salmon family made food for hungry foes," thought I, for I supposed the female had abandoned her nest.

"I walked away, and half an hour or so later, chancing to pass that abandoned nesting place again, I peered over, and to my surprise saw the female back on the nest again, attended and watched over by a splendid specimen of a salmon of the former sex. He had stepped right into the shoes of his predecessor, so to speak, and was as tender, devoted and watchful as ever the husband was.

"This could hardly be explained by constancy on the part of the widowed salmon. Blinded by the sympathy I had had for her and I put an end to that new conjugal felicity of hers by spearing her second husband. He wasn't out of the water a minute before that female salmon, the second time a widow, dashed away down the stream again with a very few minutes came back with a third husband. He started right in, as proud of his new place as the other two, and seemed even inclined to be spouster over her than they were, if that were possible.

"Without a quail I spared that third husband. The widow scarcely waited until he was landed on the bank before she was away again, returning with a fourth husband. Of this one I soon bereft her, as I did the fifth that she brought back and established as lord of that nest.

"I don't know whether the supply of unmated salmon had been exhausted by her or not, but on her sixth venture she returned home with a big, handsome brown trout as her consort. He seemed fully as devoted to her as any of her husbands had been, and all perhaps would have been well if I had left her to her new love. But her conduct rather nettled me and I enlarged the tragedy by spearing her.

"The trout consort darted away to the middle of the stream, but after I had lifted the often widowed salmon from the water he returned to the nest, glanced over it a moment, then deliberately dived the egg and then returned and sailed off down stream.

"From a scientific point of view all this was exceedingly valuable and interesting, so say highly important, as an exhibit and demonstration of salmon character, but the gentleman who owned the estate didn't look at it with scientific eyes. I had made away with eight of his finest salmon, and he was a little bit too, and I had to look for another place."

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Conodoguin Creek would be called a river if it flowed north or eastern Pennsylvania or in New York State. It is bigger than the Lehigh, the Lackawanna, the Lackawanna, the Wallkill, the Neversink or either of the branches of the Delaware, all of which are rivers. It comes up from below the Maryland border fetching mud, catfish and snapping turtles with it as far as a point opposite Harrisburg, Pa., and there pours them into the Susquehanna River. In the Conodoguin Creek the snapper and the catfish fisherman finds his game more plentiful and better worth going after than almost anywhere else.

There are likewise a good many muskrats along the Conodoguin. This is one reason why the snapping turtle is so frequent there, for the snapper loves to have the muskrat for a neighbor. He eats that industrious rodent in the sum-

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mer and takes possession of its sun-

The Conodoguinet snapper will watch at muskrat holes as a cat watches for a mouse. If no muskrat comes out within a reasonable time the snapper drops in at the muskrat's house by the entrance under the water and bags its inmates.

Snapper fishing is at its height now and along the Conodoguinet. The local newspapers report that a couple of market fishermen gathered in two bands of snappers in one day recently.

The tackle for taking the Conodoguinet snapper is simple but effective. It consists of a short and stout line, a big hook and a chunk of mutton. Other meats for bait are used, but the Conodoguinet snapper prefers mutton. Some fishermen walk along the shore, yank out their turtle, kick him over on his back, put their mark on his under shell and go on after more.

No one ever thinks of taking up and carrying off some one else's snappers thus marked, and a stroll along the snapper fishing grounds of the Conodoguinet any day during the fishing season will show the stroller such turtles at short intervals lying on their backs and waiting patiently to be lugged off to the shambles, for the snapper has to be butchered the same as if he were a sheep.

Some fishermen take the Conodoguinet snapper by setting out lines. Others go out armed with a long pole. Then they jab down into the holes where the snappers retire at times. If there is a snapper within reach of the intruding end of the pole the man at the other end of the pole will shoot out his head and grab it. Having grabbed it he won't let go, and he is hauled out and killed.

Beneath the formidable shell of the Conodoguinet snapper are hidden nine different kinds of meat, all tender, well flavored and juicy. That alone, so the local epicures declare, ought to give the Conodoguinet the right to be called a river.

According to local belief likewise, the Conodoguinet snapper is a particularly smart creature, although the readiness with which he throws himself away on a chunk of mutton or the end of a bare pole would not seem to be corroboration of the statement. Yet they aver that the wisdom of the Conodoguinet snapper has been made manifest in many ways. One particular instance of it they do not.

There are game birds of the rocky and marshy kind that feed along the similar banks of the Conodoguinet, and sportsmen gun for them. The local notion is that the snapper knows when he leaves the sound of guns that gunners are out after birds, and the Conodoguinet snapper does in position to look out for wounded or dead birds that may fall into the water among the reeds and flags, as such birds often do.

THE GOBBLED GUDGEON.

A Fish They Scare Babies With Up Lake Canandaigua Way.

"Never landed a gobbled gudgeon," remarked an Ontario county citizen. "Of course you never did, if you haven't fished in Canandaigua Lake, for it is the gobbled gudgeon is quartered anywhere else I never heard of it."

"The gobbled gudgeon is a study and no mistake about it. He isn't handsome. In spite of a countenance as open as a milk pan and a smile as expansive as a turnover pie, the gobbled gudgeon is not handsome. And as for being useful he never filled any long felt want upon way except as an effective substitute for the bogie man."

"Up where the shimmering wavelets of Canandaigua Lake lave the sun-kissed shores that stop those waves from slopping over and joining the boisterous waters of Seneca, the fond mother never soothes her babe to silence by referring to the possible coming of the bogie man. Up in that sweet and ill favored bailiwick of the Empire State, when the hope of the family howls for the frosting on the cake or a hunk out of the moon its mother simply addresses vacancy and says:

"Here, gobbled gudgeon! Come get Bubby!"

"And Bubby crawls back into himself so far that they have to hold a looking glass to his mouth to find out whether he is breathing."

"When they started in to build the gobbled gudgeon my opinion is that it was the intention to make of him a fish. They got the head finished, and

after looking it over, went to figuring on what a critical world would think of a fish constructed on lines in harmony with that head, and were stricken with remorse. They tried to do the very best they could with the job, and tumbled down the rest of the structure so that when all was finished it looked somewhat like a snake and somewhat like a pollywog, but wasn't much of either. So, being neither fish, snake nor pollywog, all they could do was to call the creature a gobbled gudgeon and let it go at that.

"If the growing gobbled gudgeon bore out the promise of his head, by the time he was a month or so old he would be as big as a ten-year-old boy, but the promise early fails of fulfillment and the gobbled gudgeon drops away from his shoulders down and takes on the graceful contour of a wedge. About a foot and a half in length exhausts the ambition of a gobbled gudgeon as to acquiring stature, but he will have a mouth you could easily wear for an overcoat."

"He has only one fin. It starts in half way up his back and never quite until it runs down to his tail and all around it, and then half way up his keel. That fin will be an inch wide and it is cool and plastic, like a vein of wet glue decorating his exterior."

"The gobbled gudgeon has no horns like a catfish, but he sports a long nose, a wide and waving goatee made from the same material as his comprehensive fin. You are very apt to hook one of these exclusive denizens of Canandaigua's pellucid depths almost any minute while fishing in that water for something else, which reminds me to remark incidentally that when you find any place where there is better trout, perch, pickerel, bass or several other kinds of fishing than in Canandaigua Lake please let me know and I'll make it worth your while."

"Yes, sir," said the fisherman, "you are apt to hook one of the exclusive Canandaigua finny denizens. We usually tow him ashore when this brought in contact with the gobbled gudgeon, and chuck him up on land for the crows to dine on."

"Tenacity of life is another of the strong points of the gobbled gudgeon. When he is tossed ashore if there are no crows to dispose of him, and you pass that way a couple of hours later, you will find him lying there asleep and breathing away as contentedly as a pig along the barnyard fence. While we are not proud of the gobbled gudgeon to our way, we regard him as an exhibit so unusual that we never conceal his presence among us or hesitate to discourse on his genius. He is quite worth anybody's while."

WENT BROKE ON SNAKES.

Jim Grover the Victim of His Ignorance of Blacksnakes' Ways.

"If my friend Jim Grover of Allegheny had only known a little bit about black snakes," said Paddy Griswold of Hammondsport, who knows a whole lot about snakes and other creeping, climbing, swimming and flying creatures, "he might have got his money's worth out of a chump then I don't want a cent. Why you couldn't have done them blacksnakes a greater favor than the dumping of 'em in the box with the rattlers. Rattlers is just pie with sugar and cream on for blacksnakes, and them two Huckleberry Hill rattlers is now restin' sweetly in the breadbasket of that couple o' Black Forest blacksnakes, deader'n smoked hams."

"Such was the indisputable fact. The blacksnakes had dined on the rattlers on route. Charley Phelps didn't want any blacksnakes, even with rattlers inside of 'em, so Jim Grover went broke on that little snake speculation, where, if he had only known a little bit about snakes he might have cleared up a mast to go ahead and get the pair of rattlers, two days option on the delivery of them being a condition of the agreement, Jim drove down to the Huckleberry Hill country and in twenty minutes secured the snakes from a native who went out

and caught them at a cost to Jim of 50 cents a snake. "Then Jim started back for Allegheny county gloating over how easily he was going to clean up \$11 net on the little transaction in snakes. On the way he met a Potter county man who had two Black Forest blacksnakes for sale, the blacksnakes of that particularly snaky stretch of country lying on the border of Potter and Lycoming counties, being of great fame for their size and blackness. Now Jim had no commission to supply Charley Phelps with blacksnakes, but this pair was so choice in every way he believed that he would have no difficulty in disposing of them to the snake show man at a reasonable advance over the cost price, which was only \$1 for the two.

"Charley knows drawing card snakes the minute he sees 'em," said Jim, considering the possibilities that lay in this pair of black snakes, "and I'm all but certain that he'll jump at \$5 for this couple as a big bargain. That'll clean me up \$5 for the day's job. I guess you may do me up them snakes, can't you?" said Jim to the native who had 'em for sale.

"Jim had his two rattlers in a secure box in the hind end of his wagon. He slid the two blacksnakes in the same box and drove on to Leekville, where he delivered his invoice of snakes, bulk unbroke, to Charley Phelps, who opened a space in the box to take a look at the prize he had obtained.

"Here!" said he, glaring at Jim Grover after taking the look in the box. "It wasn't blacksnakes, I wanted! How did you get it into your skull that I wanted blacksnakes?"

"But now see here, Charley," pleaded Jim. "Then is a pair of Black Forest blacksnakes, and they're only going to cost you two shillin' a foot. Ten foot of 'em, there is, all told. Black Forest blacksnakes are big with the Huckleberry Hill rattlers, is it to be a card that I'll draw better'n a stickin' plaster?"

"But where in tarnation-eyed scorpions is your Huckleberry Hill rattlers?" hollered Charley. "There ain't nothin' in the box but two sleepy blacksnakes!"

"Jim Grover took a look in the box, and sure enough only the two blacksnakes were there. He was so flabbergasted over the mysterious disappearance of the two rattlers that it was a good while before he could find words to tell Charley about his snake buying.

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"What?" exclaimed Charley. "And you shoved them blacksnakes in with the rattlers?"

"Jim admitted that he had brought about just that situation. "Well, great squirm!" and squizzle!" anybody," said Charley, who is well up on snakes, "if you ain't a double barbed wire, you're a chump then I don't want a cent. Why you couldn't have done them blacksnakes a greater favor than the dumping of 'em in the box with the rattlers. Rattlers is just pie with sugar and cream on for blacksnakes, and them two Huckleberry Hill rattlers is now restin' sweetly in the breadbasket of that couple o' Black Forest blacksnakes, deader'n smoked hams."

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